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A SERMON Of Christs Miracles.

Preached by ARTHVR DENT *Minister of the word of God,* at South-shoobery in Essex.

The fifth impression.

Acts. 3. Vers. 6.

Then said *Peter*, siluer and gold haue I none, but such as I haue that giue I thee; in the name of Iesus Christ of Nazareth, rise vp and walke.

AT LONDON
Printed by *G. E.* for *Iohn Wright*, and are to be sould at his shop at Christ-Church gate-
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A Sermon of Christes Miracles.

John. 9. 16.

Then said some of the Pharisees: This man is not of God, because hee keepeth not the Sabboth: others sayd: How can a man that is a sinner doe such miracles? And there was a dissention among them.

IN this verse is set downe a double opiniõ which the Pharisees held concerning Christ, and especially concerning the works which he had wrought among them. Some of them haue peremptorily and flatly condemned him, saying, that he was a man that was not of God: and they render a reason, or rather a shadow of a reason: namely because he kéepeth not the Sabboth, but their opinion was rash, and their iudgement false and erroneous, proceeding from the mallice and hatred of the person of Christ. Also that which they haue vsed for a reason, we haue shewed that it is likewise false: for CHRIST was so farre from breaking the Sab-

baoth, or any part of the law, that he did in full perfection fulfill the whole lawe of God.

Now followeth the opinion of the second sort of Pharasies, which sayd: How can man that is a sinner doe such miracles? as if the holy Ghost should say: If our Saviour Christ were such a prophaner and breaker of the Saboath, as you surmise him to be, then it were impossible for him, to doe such strange and wonderfull miracles, as we see he hath wrought: of this wee haue spoken before, and shall speake more hereafter, when we haue spoken generally of Miracles of the works of them: & therefore of the power of God, in working them, and also the power of angels, of Satan and of men therein. Whereas it is said; How can man that is a sinner do such Miracles? these men do insinuate, that sinners can doe such miracles in the sight of men, but to do such a miracle, as to cure a man being blind from his birth, was impossible for them. It is impossible that any sinner should do this or any such miracles which Christ did, wee are therefore to shew, first, what a miracle is, that every

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one vnderstanding the nature therof, may make such proper and peculiar vse of the same, as he ought.

A miracle is nothing else but a rare worke aparently wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God, cleane contrary to the order and instinct of nature, far aboue nature or naturall causes.

I vse so many words, that I may speake to the capacity of all the people, whereas otherwise I might vse fewer, we are therfore first to know, that it is a worke, for indeede it must be in it selfe a true worke, deed, or fact, otherwise it cannot in it selfe, and of it selfe, make men to muse and marvell at it: at least it cannot make wise men to marvell at it. If therfore it be a miracle, it must be a sensible work, not a worke in shew, illusion or deceit, but a worke in nature, in deed, and in truth: if it bee but in appearance of a worke, it is no miracle. If it be onely an illusion of the senses it is no miracle. It is then true that the illusions of Sathan are no miracles, for hee doth nothing but delude the senses of men, neither is it the celerity or agility of mens hands which are miracles, as of Jugglers, which

deceiue the people by all actiuity in contriuing the thing which they do. For they do not any true worke, but by their dexterity deceiue mens senses. These therefore are no miracles, for euery miracle must be a true worke, and fact indeed. I therefore first call a miracle, a worke, to seperate it from those that seme to be miracles, and yet are not, as by the works of sathan and his members, and also those that are done by agtility of man, which are workes in shew but not indeed. This kinde of miracle which is a true worke, hath beene wrought by diuers of GODS Children, as Moses when he was sent to deliuer the people of Israel out of Egypt, did worke many miracles, to testifie that he was sent of the Lord. He made Frogs not in appearance but indeed: hee turned the water of the riuer into blood, not in appearance but indeed. See also Elias wrought miracles, not in shew but indeed. So Christ wrought miracles not in shew but in deed. For Lazarus beeing dead in deed, he raised him vp againe indeed: when the wine wanted at the mariage, he turned water in deed into wine in deed, as pur-

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wine as any inſued out of the Vine, and ſo are all the miracles which he did, workes indéed, & not onely in appearance. When therefore wee ſée any wonderfull thing come to paſſe, wee muſt examine it whether it be a worke indéed, or only in appearance. If it bee not a worke indéed, as be the illuſions of Sathan, and of men, which deceiue the ſences, and doe not bring any worke to paſſe, then is it not a true miracle. For euery true miracle which the lord hath wrought himſelfe, or any of the Prophets, or our Sauiour Chriſt, haue béene true works. Secondly, I ſhall call it a rare worke of God, for the workes of GOD, there be ſome which are vſuall, common & ordinary: as the preſeruation of mankind, is an ordinary and vſuall work of God and it is truly ſaid of the holy Ghoſt: that we liue, moue, & haue our beeing in the Lord: yet becauſe this is vſual, ordinary, & common, yea daily and hourely, (for the Lord doth ordinarily euery day and houre, preſerue men, otherwiſe they could not liue) I ſay becauſe it is ordinary, daily & hourely, we cannot properly call it a miracle, for it doth make mé to maruel, to muſe, to be

amazed

amased and astonied at it seeing it is so vsuall and ordinary among them.

For it is the nature of miracles to, to make men muse and marvell at them. and therefore when as in the Euangelists, any miracle which our saviour Christ wrought is set downe, there also immediatly followeth, that the people were astonied: therefore that which is vsuall, and common, cannot properly be called a miracle. A miracle therefore must be a rare worke of God, seldome wrought to passe, & for this cause we cannot say that repentance, or regeneration is a miracle, for although repentance bee wrought in few, yet is it not properly a miracle, because it is ordinarily, and vsually at one time or other wrought in the hearts of Gods children. There be also many strange and wonderfull workes of nature, yet because they are not rare but vsuall, and ordinary, they be no miracles. An Adamant stone (we know not by what force) will draw Iron to it selfe: Iron is heavy of it selfe, and of it selfe cannot possibly moove from place to place, yet an Adamant if it be above it will draw it to it selfe, which is very strange and

admirable

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admirable, yet because it is vsuall and common it cannot be called a miracle. So wee may see the nature and power of some water, to turne that which in nature is gold, into stone: that is knowne to be true by experience, yet no man can shew any reason, why that water should rather doe it, then any other.

Although this be strange and wonderfull, yet because it is vsuall and ordinary, in those waters, it is noe miracle: for every miracle is a rare work that commeth to passe not ordinarily but very seldome.

This worke is called rare, eyther in regard of the thing wrought, or in regard of the manner of working it.

First in respect of the thing wrought: as when the LORD sent down Manna from heauē, to feed such a great number of people as the Israelites were, this was very rare in regard of the thing wrought. So when the Lord made the Sunne to stay in the element: so likewise (as we may read) whē the Lord made the shadow of ỳ Dial to goe back. Secondly a miracle is rare in regarde of the manner of working it, as when the water was turned into bloud,

if

it was not a rare thing to see blood, but the manner of working it, as namely with a Rod, was most rare & was never seene before. So we do see that Christs manner of healing the blind-man was very rare: therefore a miracle: if it bee a miracle indeed, first it must be a true worke. Secondly a rare worke, eyther in regarde of the thing it selfe, or in regard of the manner of doing it,

Apparantly wrought, &c.

Thirdly, a miracle must haue this annexed vnto it: for it must not bee obscure, but apparent, I meane not to the reason and iudgment of men, but to mans sense, that is, to some of his sences, or to all of them, without controuersie or doubting. This wee shall see in all true miracles wrought by God, to bee of this nature, namely cleare and euident to mans senses: for either men did feele them, as the darkenes in Egypt, or else they might touch them, taste them, or smell them. When the Lord brought his people of Israel from Egipt, al the miracles which he by his power had wrought among them, were most apparent vnto mans sense. As namely

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when they went through the red sea, there he made ỹ waters to deuide them-selues, and to stand like mighty mountaines on each side of them: in such sort, that they did most manifestly see, and behold the same. So likewise they saw, when Moses stroke the stony rack, so that therout gushed water. So they saw most euidently the walls of Iericho fall down: and therefore if there be any miracle which is not apparent of it selfe, it is no miracle. Likewise what workes so euer be done by Satan or any of his Angels, if it be not euident & to be discerned by mans sence, hence we know that it is no miracle. Let vs by this property of a true miracle, examine the miracle of the Altar of the Church of Rome, for in the sacrament of the Altar, after the Priest hath said a few words as these, (*hoc est corpus meum*) they teach ỹ there a strange worke is brought to passe: for the substance of the bread which was on the Altar, is gone and is changed into the body of Christ: if it were so, then indeed it were a miracle: but if it be a miracle, then men may discerne it by some sence or other: For let them shewe mee an instance where the Lord brought

any

any miracle which hee did not subiect to the senses of man, but in this there is no miracle, which may bee discerned by the senses: for the bread in the iudgment of all the senses, séemeth the same that it was before to the sight, it séemeth to be the very same in substance of the same qualitye and colour that it was before, it hath the same taste it had before, to the handling it appeareth the same that it was before, and hath the same smelling that it had before, there is not any sense that iudgeth now otherwise of it, then it did before, and therfore it can be no true miracle. Indéed if before I séeing it to be bread, tasting, smelling, and touching it, do iudge it to bee bread, should now, séeing, smelling, tasting and féeling it, perceiue it to be the body of Christ it were a true miracle: but séeing to all the senses it appeareth one and the same that it was before, it cannot be a miracle: but they say the outward forme and externall accident of the bread yet remaineth, but the substance of it is turned into the body of Christ, which though wee cannot perceiue by our senses, yet wee are to beléeue by faith. But how did Christ him-

selfe

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selfe deale with Thomas, when hee doubted of his resurrection: he sayd: Thrust thy finger into my side, and feele whether I haue not flesh and bones, for a spirit hath not as thou seelest me to haue: hee taketh away his doubt by the sense of feeling: and if this true naturall body of Christ were there in the bread, then might wee feele as Thomas did, for Christ still retaineth that his true and naturall body, although hee bee now glorified. In so much therefore that in the bread, there is no miracle apparant to the senses, there is noe miracle at all. But this is the difference (in Gods Church) that before it was common bread, ordained and sanctified by the Lord for the nourishment of our bodyes, but now it is the holy bread, appointed, and set apart, and sanctified by the Lord, not so much for the nourishment of our bodies, but especially for the confirmation of our fayth and the foode of our soules. The same also is to be said of the wine.

Fourthly I adde: wrought by the sole omnipotent power of GOD. Wherein I note the workers of miracles. The LORD himselfe worketh miracles, but

peculiarly and properly by his power, and not by his wisdom though both be infinite: that a miracle is wrought by the power of God, I proue by these reasons. First a miracle is a worke of great power farre passing the power of all creatures, therefore it must needes bee wrought by that power of the Creator.

Secondly it is apparent, by diuers places of the word of God, as Ioel. 2. 21. 30. there the holy Ghost ascribeth the working of miracles to the LORD himselfe. I will shew wonders in heauen & earth, saith the Lord, I care not O land, for I will doe great things. Thirdly, the holy Ghost vseth this as an argument to proue, that *Iehouah* is the Lord, and is onely to bee serued, Leuit. 26. Deut. 28. Albeit the Magitians of Egypt could worke many admirable wonders by their owne Art, and by the instruction of the Diuell, yet they confessed that the workes of Moses were not done by Moses power, nor yet by art or skill that was in Moses, nor by any naturall causes but by the finger of God, which is nothing else but his power. By this argument doth Christ proue, that his miracles

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were not done by the power of Belzebub? If I by the finger of God cast out diuels, by whome doe your Children cast them out.

Lastly, this may also appeare by the consideration of the meanes which the Lord vseth in working of miracles. As the shadow of Peter to cure diseases: Can any mans shadow cure another? No, but the Lord would haue that this meanes should shew that the thinges were wrought by his power. So the Handkercher of Paul did cure diseases, not that there were any such vertues in it, but that it came from the Lord: So also did the hem of Christs garment: is there any power in the hem of a mans garment to cure diseases? surely no, but the Lord vseth that meanes to teach vs thereby that his power onely doth worke it. Heere then wee must acknowledge, that miracles are wrought onely by the Lord, and serue greatly to the aduancing of his glory.

Lastly wee must consider, that a miracle is contrarye to the instinct of Nature. Nature had neuer any such inclination, as to bring to passe any miracle, as when the water stoode on

two

two parts, nature had a desire to make the waters runne, when as then the waters stood it was contrary to nature.

The Vse.

The vse that we must make hereof, is to giue to God that which is his owne, that we should acknowledge him to be the sole author and worker of miracles, that either haue beene or shall be in the world. If thou giue them to Satan, then dost thou constitute him, instead of the Lord himselfe: Art thou the Lords? then know that neither Sathan, nor any creature, is able to worke any miracle against thee. If thou be his, rather then his name should be dishonoured by thee, hee will worke miraculously, for thy good and preseruation.

Further this seruety to ratifie our faith in the power of God. The Diuill is his seruant, whether he will or not, he can do nothing but that which the Lord willeth.

And hereby wee hold that our bodyes shall bee rayled againe at the last day. For God is able to worke all miracles: although there bee neither bone, skinne, nor

flesh

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flesh left, yet hee is able to ioyne flesh to flesh, sinew to sinew, and raise vs vp again with the same bodies we had before.

The second part of this Sermon.

Now remaineth something to be spoken more plainly and particularly of miracles, for as in all other thinges, so also in miracles, the Lord vseth diuers and sundry waies of working. For either himselfe alone, & of himselfe alone, or else he vseth som creature in ỹ working of the same. As in the creatiō of the world he vsed not any thing out of himselfe, but in himselfe, by himselfe and of himselfe alone, he created all things of nothing. So likewise in the working of some miracles, it pleaseth him not to admit the vse of any creature whatsoeuer. As when he stayed the sunne in the firmament, he did it of himselfe without the helpe of any other. So also he turned backe the shadow of the Dyall of Azath by him-selfe alone without the vse of any other. But neuertheless in working some miracles, he vseth meanes, but

especially man for the meanes thereof. As in all the Miracles wrought in Egipt, the Lord did worke them indeed, but by the hand of Moses and Aaron. He deuided the red Sea so, that Israell passed through on dry foote, but it was done by Moses. So also hee wrought many miracles in the wildernesse before the Israelites, but by the hands of Moses and Aaron. So some miracles were done by Iudges, some by Elizeus, and others of the Prophets. So also God wrought miracles afterward, not onely by his Sonne, but also by the hands of the Apostles. So that it is a true poynt of religion, to hold that the Lord in working of miracles, doth often-times vse the meanes of man therein. In this doctrine we are to take heed of these two dangerous points. First, that we derogate nothing from the Power of God, although he vse meanes in the working of many miracles. Secondly, that we do not magnifie the Creature, which the Lord vseth, aboue that which is conuenient. Into which very many haue fallen here-tofore. For the auoyding therefore of them, it is necessary to hold these two poyntes of

Religi-

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Religion: first to beléeue and know that the omnipotent power of GOD cannot be communicated to any creature. For the Lord saith, as of his wisedome, iustice and mercy, so also of his power. I will not giue my glory to another. We are therefore to hold that the power of God cannot beséeme any creature whatsoeuer, no though it be an Angell of Heauen. Secondly that wee must know, remember, and constantly beléeue, that albeit the power of GOD could be communicated to any creature, either in heauen or in earth, yet that there is no creature capeable thereof, no creature is able to beare it. This is euident in the example of Peter, before whom when CHRIST had wrought a miracle, and hee had séene some small sight of his glory, he said, Depart from mee Lord for I am a sinfull man. If Peter could not abide the glimmering of his glory, and if it brought his sinnes to memory, in so much that hee thought himselfe vnworthy of his presence: how much more vnable had hee béene to beare the weight thereof?

But (may some say) if this be so why

then doth the Lord vse meanes in worke-
ing of myracles: why doth hee vse men
Prophets, Apostles, yea and those also
which haue no iustifying faith, and also o-
ther creatures? I aunswere, the Lord v-
seth them, not because he stands in nede
of them (for hée can worke all things of
himselfe) neither vseth he them, that men
should ascribe lesse to him, and more to the
creatures which hee vseth, but for to teach
vs these three thinges.

First to teach vs, how his maiestie doth
approue the meanes whereby thinges are
brought to passe: for if the Lord vseth
meanes when as they be of lesse vse, much
more will he approue when the meanes
are vsed which haue some power to bring
things to passe. This then is the first cause
why the Lord vseth meanes, to shew that
hee would haue vs kept, maintained, and
liue in this world, but so, as by vsing such
meanes as his maiesty shall appoint. Ther-
fore no man ought to neglect and contemne
the meanes, least he oppose himselfe against
the Lord.

Secondly, the Lord vseth creatures
in working myracles, to support and

vphold

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vphold mans weakneſſe, who is not able to looke on his maieſtie, when he worketh himselfe. This is plaine in the example of the Israelites. Exod. 19. when they came to Mount Sinai, to heare the Lord, there was such thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet exceeding lowd, and the Mount all of a smoake, because the Lord came downe by fire, they were so bereft of their senses, and were so afraide, that afterward they desired the Lord not to speake to them himselfe any more but that they might haue Moyses to speake vnto them, and they would heare him.

Thirdly the Lord vseth meanes for the tryall of our faith, of our religion, and conscience, whether wee will ascribe the worke that is wrought to the worker thereof, or to the meanes, or partly to the worker, or partly to the meanes, or as some doe, all to the meanes, and none to the worker. The Lord trieth whether wee will be constant, to ascribe the power that is in miracles vnto his maiestie, for in the miracles of Christ, wee see how diuerslye they were expounded, allbeit

they were effected by the finger of God, yet the Pharisees would not ascribe them to the worker, but said, that hee wrought miracles by Belzebub the Prince of Diuels. This is the corruption of man and want of faith: they are ready to ascribe though not all, yet at the least some part of the miracle to creatures, which are but the meane, and not wholy to the Lord, who is the only worker of miracles: for these causes the Lord vseth means in working miracles, to teach vs these things thereby, for all miracles are wrought not for him but for our cause.

The meanes which the Lord vseth are of diuers sorts, but especialy three.

First, some meanes which the Lord vseth in working of miracles, are such as may seeme to men to haue some power in them for the working of the miracle. As when Moses came to the red sea, he lift vp his Rod, and stretched out his hand ouer the waters. So when he came to the Rock to get water for the people. he stroke the Rocke with his staffe, which seemed to haue some power in it to make the water gush out of the Rock, as afterward it did.

The

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The second sort of meanes which the LORD useth, are such as habe not so much as an appearance of any force or power, or use, in the working of the miracle. Such was the hem of Christs garment. The hem of a garment hath not so much as an apperance that it should heale any that are diseased. Such was the handkercher of Paul to cure diseases, what are handkerchers or swadling cloutes (as we may as well say, for the curing of diseases) such was the shaddowe of Peter, whereunto some comming were healed of their diseases.

These were wrought when the Apostles were ignorant thereof, and when they were occupied about other matters. But yet it pleaseth the lord to use such meanes although they have not any apperance of any power in the working of a miracle.

Thirdly, the lord useth such meanes as are not available for the worke, but seeme to hinder it, as in curing of the blind man, the clay which was made, and layd upon his eies: this Christ (who was God and man) used, though it seemed to containe in it a naturall hinderance to the

Miracle. These three sort of meanes the LORD vseth, to teach vs three notable poyntes.

First, hee vseth the first meanes to try the truth of our faith, to see whether wee bee so firme in fayth, and whether we will so wholely rely vpon him, as that we will giue all glory to him for the working of the Miracle, though the meanes vsed doe seeme to haue some power of bringing it to passe, we must therefore learne to giue all glory to the Lord whatsoeuer.

Secondly, the second sort of meanes that the Lord vseth, is to teach vs, that it is hee alone that worketh Miracles, and not the creature which is vsed, his sole omnipotent power doth worke it: Let the meanes doe or bee what it will, whether it bee any creature whatsoeuer, or no creature, as was the shadow of Peter, which was nothing but the absence of light. Let vs acknowledg the LORD to bee the onely cause and worker of the Miracle.

Thirdly the third sort of meanes, teacheth vs to giue nothing to the creature it selfe which is vsed, which is contrary

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to the opinion of many superstitious people, and contrary to all Coniurers, Sorcerers, or Casters of figures: Sathan maketh them to thinke that the Miracle is brought to passe by him, or the meanes which hee appointeth, and not by the power of God.

But we must acknowledge that all creatures what-so-euer, that albeit the power of Angels bee great, yet if all these were ioyned together, yet they were not able to worke the least miracle that could be. This doctrine hath singular use. First, it teacheth vs what a miracle is. Secondly, what a miracle is not: as all manner of appearances are no miracles, whether they be illusions of Sathan, or proceed from the deceipt, subtilty, and agility of man, none of them are miracles, So the preseruation of mankinde, albeit it be a true worke wrought by God onely, yet because it is a true vsuall and ordinary worke, it is no miracle, for euery miracle is a rare worke of God.

Thirdly it teacheth vs that no worke is a miracle which cannot be felt, smelled, or perceiued by some of the senses:

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when men therefore hold vs in hand that there is a miracle, yet if we cannot see any thing, feele, smell or taste any thing, contrary to the ordinary manner, there is no miracle wrought. Therefore let the malignant Church of Rome, teach, write, and decree in their counsells, that there is a miracle wrought in the sacrifice of their Altar: Yet because I can neither see, touch, smell, nor taste any thing but the same that was before, it cannot be any miracle.

Fourthly, every miracle is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God.

If any worke be done by the power of Sathan, or of any man: or any thing be done wonderfully by the power of Nature, it is no miracle. If Sathan hath power to doe any strange thing, it is a naturall worke, and therefore no miracle. So also of the good Angells. So likewise if wee see strange thinges come to passe in the Heauens by Naturall causes: wee are not to thinke they are any miracles

Last of all, if any thing fall out accor-

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ding to the rare strength and power of some Waters, or other creatures, if it fall out by Nature, or if partly by art, and partly by nature, it is no miracle. Whatsoever therefore is not brought to passe by the sole omnipotent power of God, and that is not contrary to Nature, it is no miracle.

It followeth now to see, how many sorts and kindes of miracles there be. I meane not how many sorts there be in Nature (for so there is but onely one true miracle) but in name, and as they are called, for so there may be diverse, and thus I gather out of the words of these Pharisees. How can man that is a sinner do such miracles: insinuating thereby, that there be some miracles which sinners may doe yet not such as CHRIST has done: Out of this place then wee gather that in name there be two sorts of miracles. One is a true and divine miracle, which is that whereof we haue spoken before, which is an undeceiueable miracle, for it is not done to deceiue any, but to magnifie the worke thereof, and for the good of them

them for whom it is wrought, and for the profit of those which behold it: it is called diuine, because it is wrought by the sole omnipotent power of God. Besides this there is a false' daine, and deceiueable miracle: false I say because it is not this: for whatsoeuer is not this: is a false Miracle, and daine, because it cannot haue any good, godly, profitable, and holy vse to the conscience of man, and deceiueable, because it deludeth men that are to discerne and iudge of it. This is the miracle which the Pharisées héere speake of, the which is graunted to bee done by the wicked. Else where in the Scriptures wée read, who are the workers of this miracle, as namely Sathan himselfe doth oftentimes worke it.

So also his Ministers doe often-times worke the same, for the holy Ghost teacheth vs, Math. 24. 24. That in the latter daies there shall come false Christs and false Prophets' and shewe great signes, and wonders, so that if it were possible they should deceiue the verye Elect. Wée must not imagine that the false Christs shall worke true miracles, but they shall worke

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worke such strange and wonderfull things, that they should cary away many after them: nay if the Lord had not decreede in his secret counsell to saue them that they should neuer fall away, they would also deceiue them. Whereby we may bee admonished, that seeing wee are in the last age of the world, that fearefull times are at hand, wherein false Christs shall arise and deceiue many. And is not Sathan now strong in the hearts of the reprobates? that they will teach false doctrines.

Now what if Hereticks and Schismatickes should haue power to confirme their doctrine by myracles and strange wonders? would not many beleeue in them? Let vs therefore (as Paul taught the Galathians) prepare our hearles that if an Angell from heauen teach vs any other doctrine then that which wee haue receiued in the written word of GOD, let him be accursed. The holy Ghost also foretelleth vs. 2. Thes. 2 9. That before the comming of CHRIST to iudgement, shall appeare Antichrist with al his power, with signes, and lying wonders,

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The Holy Ghost doth before admonish vs hereof. That wee should not wauer at euery motion, nor fall away at euery tryall, but bee constant, and hold fast the Doctrine which we haue receiued from the Lord, by his Prophets, his Sonne, and his Apostles: then although we be tried with Heresies and Schismatikes, and seeme to our selues and to others to be lost, yet we shall be reserued to eternall saluation.

But some man may say. If Sathan can worke such miracles, and the Lord would haue false Christs to arise and worke wonders, how shall we iudge of a miracle that is done: whether it proceed from the Lord or from Sathan and his Ministers, from a good cause and worker, or from an euill, and what we are to hold and thinke of the power of Sathan, how farre it reacheth, & what it is able to doe. I answer, that this is a very necessary point to be knowne, and seeing we haue entred into the handling of Miracles, wee will shew what miracles can be wrought by Sathan, what is his power, where it beginneth, and where it endeth.

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The third part of this Sermon.

Holy therefore it remaineth to speake of the power of Sathan. Certaine it is, and we are to beléeue it by faith, that the power of Sathan is not equall to the power of GOD: It is not so strong, so large, and so wide: it is euery way infinitly lesse: there is no comparison betweene that which is infinite and that which is finite. If we compare it with good Angels, it will be lesse then some, and greater then other some, as afterward we shall more plainely see: but if wee compare it with the power of man, it is farre greater euery way: but yet wee must know that it is a finite and naturall power, not supernaturall; for then none could bee saued: it is mighty, but yet not Almighty. But that wee may better conceiue of it, let vs see wherein it lyeth. All the power that Sathat hath, consisteth in fiue points: First in his knowledg or vnderstanding.

Secondly, in his deed, action, or worke. For according as a mans knowledge is

such

such is his deed: so is Sathans: as his knowldege is great, so also his worke great. For his knowledge it is to be considered whence it ariseth, and how he commeth by it, so shall we better iudge of the greatnesse thereof. He hath his knowledge by these meanes that follow.

First from his spirituall Nature, for by Nature he is a spirit, and therefore by Nature hath the measure of knowledge giuen by God to a spirit which is great. We know that there is a greater measure of knowledge in man, then is in a brutebeast, by reason of that nature which the Lord hath giuen to man aboue beasts. So the Diuell is made of a spirituall substance, and of that only: so that he hath not a body which may hinder him to see into the nature, quality & operation of a spirit, and therefore being a spirit, he hath the knowledge of a spirit. In that therefore he is a spirit, he hath a greater familiarity with our spirits then otherwise he could haue. In regard therefore of his nature his knowledge is great.

Secondarily, the measure of his knowledge may be discerned by his creation,

God

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God created him a good Angell, and gaue him the same measure of knowledge that he gaue to other Angells: Loke therefore what knowledge is in a good Angell by creation, the same knowledge is in Sathan by his creation. It may bee that hee retaineth still that measure of knowledge which he then receiued, albeit as it may bee thought, that as man by his fall, lost a great measure of that knowledge which hee had by his creation: so the Diuell lost a great measure of his knowledge by his Apostacy from the Lord. Further it is to bee knowne, that the diuell being now fallen, is not of the consultation of the Lord, as the good Angells are, for they stand alwaies before his face, ready to doe any thing that hee shall command them, for the good of the Elect, and therefore they are of the consultations of the Lord, but Sathan is not so, and therefore hee cannot haue so great knowledge as they haue, which is a great comfort to those that be the true children of God, that the good Angells, by the measure of their knowledge, are more able to saue and defend vs, then the Diuell is by the mea-

sure of his knowledge to harme vs.

Thirdly, the diuill since his fall, hath increased his knowledge, both on the things on earth, and of the waies of God, by long obseruations and continuall experience, who hath alwaies had experimentall knowledge of the nature of man: for he is well acquainted with the age of men hée knoweth what bée their affections, what is their nature, and what is their disposition, he knoweth what things be offensiue to mē, he knoweth also what pleaseth them best in their young age, what in their middle age, & what in their ould age. And as in these things, so also hath hée experience in supernatural things. For he remembreth by whom he hath bin resisted, & who will not yéeld to him. This then must greatly amplifie his knowledge, séeing hée hath alwaies had such long experience of all thinges that come to passe. As put the case there were one man aliue which were perfect in sense, in body, in minde, in reason, and memory, and in all the faculties both of the body, and the minde, that had liued from the beginning of the world vnto this day, and had obserued all

things

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thinges that had fallen out heretofore: this man would tell such wonderfull things, both past and to come, by naturall causes, and continuall observation, that I feare me least many would worship him as a God: therefore the diuill must needs haue great knowledge, seeing that he hath had all these. But he knoweth more then any man could haue done: for he doth not onely know those among whom he liueth, and the thinges that falleth out amongst them, but he goeth about into every family and country, obserueth what is done, and is well aquainted with their conversation.

Fourthly, besides this he hath also another meanes to encrease his knowledge. When the Lord commaundeth him to appeare before him to render accounts of all the workes that hee hath done, Iob. 1. 16. When the children of GOD, that is; the good Angels came before the LORD, Sathan stode amongst them, and the Lord said vnto him, Whence commest thou? and hee answered, From compassing the Earth too and fro: and the LORD sayd, Hast thou not considered my seruant Iob, how there is none like him in the

earth, an vpright and iust man? Sathan answered: It is not for nothing that Iob feareth thee, hast thou not made a hedge about him and his house, and about euery thing which hee hath on euery side? but touch all that hee hath, and then see whether hee will not blaspheme thee to thy face. Sathan knew well enough, that man will make shew of religion in prosperity, but in aduersity, by impatience would fall away: For hereupon the Lord gaue him liberty to afflict Iob, in visiting his body with sickneſſe, in taking away his children, and his goods: but whence hath he this knowledge: from the reuelation of the Lord: he knew that Iob should be visited with great sickneſſe, and lose his children, and his goods, when he heard it from the Lord, and so he knoweth many other things which are to come to passe, and after he once knoweth them, he goeth to Witches or such like, and tell them thereof, who likewise tell others of the same before it comes to passe, & so deceiue men thereby, making them to thinke that they know it of them-selues: but neither they, nor the Diuill know it of themselues,

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but by reuelation of the Lord vnto Sathan.

Fiftly, Sathan hath another excellent meanes to increase his knowledge which the Lord hath also graunted vnto men: for they know what is to come by the Reuelation of the Prophets: for if there be any curse belonging to the people, the Prophets do denounce the same, and make the people to know thereof, by the preaching of the word: whereas therefore the word is preached, there is Sathan present: hee obserueth the doctrine, whether it bee of power to bring men from the kingdome of darkenesse, to the Lord: from sinne vnto repentance. If it bee, then is hee most busie, either to stop it from the Eare, or to pull it out of thy heart, if they haue once receiued it, as Math. 13. 19. By this meanes therefore hee increaseth his knowledge, that he may worke more couertly, and be the lesse discerned: for he can turne himselfe into an Angell of light.

Sixtly, hee hath yet another meanes to increase his knowledge, and that is by the obseruation of naturall causes. If you speake of an Astronomer, hee can tell that

best: if yée speake of an Astrologer, hee is most cunning therein. Yea that which men gesse an, and as it were groape at in the darke, hee beholdeth and knoweth most certainely and can tell any thing that is come to passe by the course of the Starres and other naturall causes. If we speake of knowledge in the Arts, there is none comparable to him: hee is most skilfull in all the tongues, and there is no time that is hid from him. So that by these meanes hee hath wonderfully increased his knowledge. But some may say: hath hee knowledge in any things in which the good Angels haue no knowledge? No, for they are as diligent for the saluation of the godly, as hee is for their destruction. Psal. 91. 11. GOD giueth his Angels charge to keepe Christ and all that are his, in all their wayes: nay they pitch their tents about him that feareth the Lord, to keepe him on euery side, that no harme befall him any way. And therefore as soone as Sathan had left off tempting Christ, the good Angels came & ministred vnto him all things that were requisit for him in this life. But doth not Sathans

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knowledge serue to the working of a miracle? No, for it is a finite knowledge, and therefore cannot produce any miracle, for euery true miracle is wrought by an omnipotent power.

The second thing wherin Satans power doth consist in his action, or his deed, which as his knowledge is great, so it is likewise great. Let vs therefore see his actions. The deed of perswading is great, for he moued Cain contrary to his knowledge and contrary to nature, not onely to reuile his mother, but to kill him, he talked not with Caine, but by motions and perswasions in his heart did allure him thereunto. But it appeareth more great in his first action against man kind, as when he came to our first parents in the forme of a Serpent: (which argueth his great power, that he can transforme himselfe into such a creature, and abuse the tongue of a Serpent to that end.) so we read of his actions also in Exodus, when Moses wrought miracles before Pharaoh by the finger of God. Satan also by his Enchanters did worke the same miracles, yet not true miracles, because they did them not by the finger of

God, but by the power of Sathan. So also 1. Samuel. 28. Sathan comes to a witch, and would also tel the witch what successe Saul should haue in his battaile that he tok in hand, hee came in the shape of Samuel, so that Saule thought he had bin Samuel. So also would he talk familiarly with men: therefore the Lord gaue a law that if any one consulted with a familiar spirit, hee should die, which law had beene in vaine, if none had consulted familiarly with him. So he was a lyer in the mouth of all the false Prophets, although they themselues did not at that time perceiue it. So hes possessed mens bodyes, as in the Gospell, when our Sauiour had cast him out of a man, hée straight way went into a heard of Swine, and euen so hée is able to draw mens bodies after him. We may also sée his power by a comparison with the good Angells. 2. Kings. 19. An Angel of the Lord slew an hundreth and 85000 men of Zenacharibs Host in one night. Now the same power is in Sathan by his creation, which hereby appeareth to be very great. So when he carryed Christs body vpon a pinnacle of the Temple, & vp into a moun-

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taine to tempt him. And Acts. 16. 19, there were exorcistes that would cast forth Diuels in the name of Jesus, but the euill spirit in the man, ran on them, and ouer-came them, so that they fled out of the house naked, and wounded. It is therefore certaine, that Sathan is of a wonderfull power, and that the children of God haue often-times tryed, both in themselues, and also in others. Among many other I remember one that is worthy remembrance.

There was a man in Geneua, who feeling some-thing to fall out contrary to his minde and for diuerse causes which is not needfull to repeate, blasphemed God, & desired that if there were any Diuills they might come and take him away, who was presently in the aire, and neuer heard of after, saue only that his cap fell off his head, which sheweth that sathã hath great power: this teacheth vs that men must not bee careleſſe, but must looke to themselues. For Satan is a roaring Lion seeking whó he may sooneſt deuoure: watch therfore and pray, least yee fall into temptation. But if satans power be so great, how comes it to passe,

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that many men do so well in this world? I answer, this power is barred and limited by the Lord, and that by two especiall limits. The first limit, is his Nature, for he is not able to doe any thing than that which his naturall disposition will permit and suffer. The second limit is, the will of GOD: for he can doe nothing against the will of GOD. Except the Lord doe either permit him or command him, hee is not able to doe any thing at all. As it is also in other creatures, the waters should by nature ouer-flowe the whole earth, yet they doe not because it is the will of GOD. So also is it with Sathan, as appeareth, when the Lord gaue him power of all Iobs goods, beyond the Lords will he could not goe, for the LORD will not suffer him to doe any thing to his Children, but onely that which shall tend to their good. Art thou in misery, or in any dangerous distresse, wherein thou art most subiect to the cruelty of Sathan? bee of good comfort, Sathan is limitted, hee cannot doe any thing to thee, but onely that which the Lord commandeth him. But may not Sathans knowledge

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and power bee vsed? Answere it may. God vseth it in punnishing, trying and correcting his children. Againe the Apostles vsed his power, for they haue deliuered men to Sathan as Paule did. 1. Tim. 1. 20. Himeneus and Alexander, & as hee would haue done the incestuous Corinths. But may not a man vse it in familiar sort, in talking, bargaining, & consulting with Sathan? No. This is forbidden Deu 18 Leuit. 20. & wee are commanded to resist the Diuill, and to flie from him, wee must not therefore consult with him. He may oftentimes tell the trueth, but wee must not accept it. Christ gaue vs example hereof, for hee sayd, that Christ was the Sonne of God, which was a trueth, yet CHRIST commanded him to bee silent, to teach vs, that the trueth is not to be receiued from him, for he is the Father of lies. Here then all men are forbidden to seeke vnto satan, to know any trueth whatsoeuer. And therfore hereby wee condemne those that vse witchery, by the counsell of Sathan, and in the former places, the very action of consulting with satan, though no harme come thereby, is flatly death to

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the party: I would this law were established in all Christian Churches, then there would not bee so many witches in that kinde, as now there are. I confesse indeed, there be some which bee counted witches, which indeed are not, as namely those which hurt Cattell, as Oxen, Horse, Swine, or such like, or else children, not from the counsell of Satan, but by the traditions of other women, by poisoning them, in doing nothing but using the naturall causes thereof. Those I would have punished, yet not in the name of witches, but in the name of murtherers. Some men think that they may ouer-rule Sathan by coniuration, in using this preparation, which is set downe by some of late, that they must make a Circle, and in it make Triangles, Quadrangles, and Crosses, and speake certaine words, as saying the Pater noster and many other such like things that they may call vp Satan in what shape they will, and he will appeare and doe for them, that which they desire. But is Satan a friend of theirs? can any such things make him obedient to man? Dwelt thou thinke that thou canst ouer-rule him by this meanes?

No

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No surely, but hee rather by this meanes deceiueth thee, and all that are of thine opinion. And thus he deceiueth them that vse Characters. So there bee Charmes vsed to get away the Head-ache, and Tooth-ache. But doth the Charme get it away? No, Sathan knoweth before that thy Head-ache shall goe away, and therefore causeth thee to vse that Charme, and thereby would moue thee to ascribe it to the Charme.

But when Sathan whispereth men in their eares, how shall they know whether it be he, or a good Angell that speaketh to them? I answer: there be diuerse manifest tokens, whereby thou maiest discerne this.

First the Lord doth not now vse such meanes to reueale his will vnto men: thou art therefore alway to suspect it to bee of Sathan.

know by, if it be a good angell, thou maiest Secondly this: for if it be a good angell, it will tell thee, either at first or at last, what it is, and for what it commeth, and from whence, as in times past the good angels shewed themselues to Abraham and Lot.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, if it be a good Angel, he will assure thee to keepe the written word of God: if he do not, then suspect him.

The vse.

The vse of all this doctrine is to lead vs vnto God, to acknowledge him to bee our onely Lord and Sauiour, and to embrace the Sonne of God, as our King. In all things therefore we must go vnto him.

But whereas it is sayd: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? it may bee asked whether Gods enemies can worke any miracles? I answere: he that worketh is not against Christ, but with him: and we see that those which indeuoured Acts. 16. to worke a miracle could not. And there was dissension among them.

Herein wee see that the Lord doth so worke that Christ and his do finde fauour among their enemies, and that by their dissension among themselues. Here we see that Schisme is neither a note of a false Church, nor yet of a true Church, here it is in a false Church: schisme ariseth of the diuersity of knowledge and iudgement of men:

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men: for all men haue not one knowledge and iudgement, and all see not the truth, and if they should, yet all haue not the like yeelding affection thereunto. We are therefore to prepare our selues to meete with schismes, for it is necessary that there should be Heresies, 1. Cor. 11. 10: and that in the Church of God: that those which are approued might bee knowne.

FINIS.